



## Press Release

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

January 9, 2015

**CONTACT:** Valerie Martinez, Chelsea Dickerson  
909-445-1001

# Celebrities, City Officials Empower El Monte Sixth-Graders at 'Believe in Yourself' Youth Summit

**El Monte, Calif.** –The City of El Monte, El Monte City School District and Mountain View School District hosted a Youth Summit on Friday, Jan. 9 at Columbia School, where leaders from an array of careers shared their experiences to inspire success for hundreds of sixth-graders from diverse backgrounds and often difficult life circumstances.

“Through today’s speakers and activities, we wanted the students to leave the Summit with a strong sense of all the possibilities they can pursue,” said El Monte City Councilman Juventino “J” Gomez. “We had lofty goals to bring together as many students as possible and I’m proud that we were able to reach more than 1,000 youths in our community.”

The Summit, the largest in the San Gabriel Valley, was the brainchild of El Monte Mayor Pro Tem Bart Patel and Councilman Gomez and represents one of the first such collaborations between the City and its School Districts. The program targets sixth-graders to help them in their transition to a middle school setting, a time that heralds significant changes as they prepare for their teen years.

“As a parent of four, I know this is a critical time in these students’ lives to convey to them how important it is to believe in their potential,” said Mayor Pro Tem Patel. “Our mission was to present positive role models who demonstrate how following your dreams will lead to success.”

The Summit presented a forum for students to hear from successful leaders, engage in dialogue, gain confidence and learn ways to overcome obstacles as they continue to grow and pave a path towards success. Highlights of the event were remarks from three actors: Tom Choi, currently appearing on MTV’s Teen Wolf; Michael Gregory, the voice for Call of Duty-Black Ops and appearing in the movies Robocop and Total Recall; and Zibby Allen, who has had roles on Grey’s Anatomy and Disney’s A.N.T. Farm. KTLA Channel 5 Meteorologist Vera Hernandez shared with students her personal stories about how she followed her dreams and achieved her goals.

Students from several local schools participated in the half-day program. Schools from the El Monte City School District include: Cleminson, Cortada, Wilkerson, New Lexington, Frank Wright, Le Gore, Shirpsen, Rio Vista, Durfee, Cherrylee, Columbia, Potrero and Rio Hondo schools; from Mountain View School District: Parkview, Willard F. Payne, Twin Lakes, and Alfred S. Madrid Middle School.

PHOTO CAPTION 1: El Monte Mayor Pro Tem Bart Patel, Actors Michael Gregory, Tom Choi and Zibby Allen, El Monte Councilman Juventino “J” Gomez, El Monte City School District Superintendent Dr. Maribel Garcia and Mountain View School District Superintendent Lillian Maldonado French spoke to El Monte sixth-graders about believing in themselves and following their dreams.

PHOTO CAPTION 2: More than 1,000 sixth-graders attended the City of El Monte's Youth Summit, the largest youth summit in the San Gabriel Valley.

###

**The City of El Monte**, located in Southern California, is committed to improving the quality of life for its citizens and strives to provide its community personalized service, uncompromising commitment, and individualized accountability. For information on the City of El Monte, please call 626-580-2001 or visit [www.elmonteca.gov](http://www.elmonteca.gov).